no merit is due to local workmen, may, after recent investigations, be doubted.

Mr. Poole falls into the mistake which we have had occasion to point out in the work of another writer. The thrust of the semicircular arch is not almost entirely vertical. The acutely pointed arch exercised much less thrust than that which preceded it. In this was its great merit. The Norman "buttresses," which were shallow pilasters having merely a decorative purpose, suggested the buttresses of the Gothic style. These were necessary, notwithstanding the greater facilities of construction which the pointed arch afforded, because in place of resisting the thrust by a continuous wall of great thickness, it was concentrated at a particular point, *at* which was placed a buttress, and this was required to resist not only the pressure of the aisle vaulting, but—unlike the preceding style—also that of the vaulted roof to the nave. As the arch became depressed, the increased thrust required that greater projection of the buttress which was given to it. The use of the buttress was dictated by sound geometry, and the most economical distribution of materials, and it rendered the thick walls of early buildings unnecessary in succeeding instances. To appreciate the full merit of the mediæval architects, it requires that this should be properly understood.

It should be remarked that during the Perpendicular Period, many of those characteristics which we have noticed, were almost wholly obliterated, and the period is, perhaps, not erroneously viewed as the long decline of Gothic art. But it was not without many distinctive excellencies; it added greatly to the resources of the art; and had not political and religious changes supervened, it is not altogether certain that the general abandonment of Gothic architecture would have taken place; at least, a return to Decorated forms is sometimes observable, which betokens—we are inclined to think—rather an independence of thought, than that poverty of invention which is mainly characteristic of the facility of decoration which attended the use of panelling. Nevertheless, the error must be guarded against, that the subversion of Pointed Architecture is to be traced mainly to the Reformation. It was not consequent upon the dissolution of the monasteries, which indeed preceded the Reformation, and it is remarked that Wolsey had dissolved and despoiled religious houses to found his own college long before that event took place.

Mr. Poole leads us through the various changes of style, during which the several influences we have enumerated were at work, and gives the history of the principal buildings in which these changes are exemplified. He has generally executed his task with ability, and has produced a work of reference, which cannot but be found useful. We are the more prone to give him credit for what he has done, because if we may judge from his concluding paragraph, *he* has not the self-sufficiency, or "little knowledge," which has too often rejected the assistance of those who devote their lives to architectural studies and practice, and because, in deprecating too severe a judgment upon what has been done in modern Gothic Architecture, he recognises "that it does not fall to the lot of the same person or the same generation, both to be first in action, and to profit by experience." There is a limit to all human ability, and time and circumstances have effected those changes in taste, over which individual architects had no power of control. We are now reaping the advantages of the labours of those who have examined and explained the characteristics of Gothic Architecture. It must not be forgotten how recently the style has received this succinct exposition; and if we are superior to our ancestors in most things, and if we regret that our *religious* architecture, particularly, is an exception to that superiority, we may confidently say that the state of architectural knowledge in England gives ground for the anticipation that the ART will again achieve great results.

BUILDERS' BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION.—Mr. BURY, the president, had an interview with the Earl of Carlisle on Wednesday last, when his lordship consented to take the chair at the anniversary dinner, which is to take place early in July.

ON COMPARISONS AND EXCLUSIONS OF STYLES IN ARCHITECTURE.*

IT will probably be thought by most of us that, of late, enough and to spare has been said concerning style in architecture; and certainly, in an antagonistic mood, much praise has been bestowed on this style, and much abuse vented against that or the other; but I have had the presumption to think that no recognised style of architecture in existence calls for either that unqualified censure, or that exclusive praise, which has been so freely and abundantly expressed concerning all styles in their turn.

For my own part, I have a strong desire to see rallied, as it were, under the banner of the grand, the beautiful, and the picturesque, all that is admirable and worthy of imitation in the various and sometimes conflicting attributes of the Grecian, the Roman, the Italian, and the Gothic styles; for that each of these does contain much that is admirable and worthy of imitation, the consent of a majority of the whole civilized world goes far to prove. Indeed, I should apologize for the assertion of so palpable a truism, were it not that the language of some amongst our architectural fraternity would tend to a contrary conclusion.

There can be no doubt of there being such a thing as bigotry in the fine arts, as well as certain other matters, and in architecture it abounds exceedingly. As one way of being convinced of this, let any individual who has studied architecture progressively, for some fifteen or twenty years, consult his own personal experience. He will remember, perhaps, that, at the outset of his career, he was taught to put faith solely in the pure and sublime triad of Grecian orders; he was to take his stand upon the Acropolis of Athens, as upon the topmost summit—the veritable Olympus—of architectural excellence, and thence look down upon Rome and upon the nations given to the heresy of Gothicism, as containing naught but debased imitations and barbarous perversions of that art which, forsooth, the Greeks alone understood.

But, as years advance, this young student begins to perceive that the ruins of the Temple of Jupiter, situated in a cowfield at Rome, will almost bear comparison with the monument of Lysicrates, discovered in one of the gardens of his beloved Athens; and thus, by degrees, he begins to perceive the existence of beauties in Rome that he had never dreamt of; nay, perhaps ultimately, like an inconstant lover, he entirely discards his first love, Greece, and attaches himself, with a new-born fervency, to Rome. But still he prides himself upon being a classicist, and that he has not defiled himself with Gothic incongruities and absurdities. As time advances, however, he finds himself compelled by self-interest, or necessity, to embrace even the Gothic, and afterwards, peradventure, the Elizabethan style, which, in the days of his innocence, he was taught to look upon as a monstrous jumble of all the abominations ever perpetrated in the name of architecture. Lastly, he throws to the dogs his early and verdant antipathies, surmounts antique prejudices, and, becoming a wiser and better man, finds beauty even in the Gothic and Elizabethan styles, and good in every one.

To my thinking nothing can be more ludicrous than the controversies that sometimes take place between the upholders of one style of architecture and those of another.

Leeds has very justly remarked that "indiscriminate and exclusive admiration of any one style is more akin to blind and ignorant prejudice, than to real sympathy with it, and to enlightened taste."

"Besides," as he further observes, "as much or even more depends upon the spirit with which a style is treated than what it is in itself; for as the noblest may be vulgarized, and be in course of time corrupted by the very means resorted to in order to maintain it in its pristine integrity, so may the poorest be aggrandized and elevated, if treated with *maestria*."

Of late years Gothic architecture has been thrust before us so multifariously, and, with some worthy exceptions, so *shabbily*, that to confess the simple truth, it cannot be wondered at that some restive and not very deeply reflective spirits should now kick against it altogether; but, as must always be the case in these outrageous partizanships, neither side is altogether in the right, some truth and a great deal of error being on both sides.

I have said that these controversies about styles are very ludicrous, and for this reason,—that the prejudice against any particular style is invariably more or less in proportion to the want of that knowledge of its principles which is only to be acquired by diligent and impartial study and long practice.

One gentleman writes a facetious book, to prove that construction is no part of architecture. Doubtless it is a very convenient doctrine for any who will not take the trouble to acquire a knowledge of the principles of the things condemned, to excuse an inactivity. No one individual has any right to condemn that which has met with the approval of a large number of men of taste and discernment, without adducing very clear and sufficient grounds for his dissent; and I must take the liberty of saying, that all I have heard advanced by way of objection against any style of architecture now in vogue, just amounts to what may be expressed by the vulgar distich—

> "Different men are of different opinions,
> Some like leeks, some like inions."

There is a phrase in the classics to the same effect, but not quite so expressive.

I have supposed the case as of an unfavourable comparison of what has been called the Christian with the pagan styles, and the attempted exclusion or degradation of the former, but my argument would be precisely similar were the circumstances reversed; and this will readily be believed when I avow that I am much less acquainted with the principles and practice of Gothic architecture than with other styles, and that, personally, I have the greater predilection for classical architecture.

It is not in our art alone that the lack of capacity or comprehension and patient study go hand in hand with contemptuous censure and objection. Take music for example. When the grand symphonic compositions and the later instrumental quartets of the greatest composer the world ever saw, first appeared in this country, they were looked upon as being the wild emanations of semi-insanity, nobody could play them, nobody could understand them, but they have since exalted the name of Beethoven to the highest pinnacle of fame.

And, again, there are the same crude and virulent antipathies with regard to styles of music, as exist in reference to styles of architecture.

One party will take its stand upon the classical works of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, and deny that any good thing can be found in those of Rossini, Donizetti, Auber, and others of the same school; and, as for the popular Jullien, he is a Goth of so outrageous a character, that they would almost sentence him to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. I trust I shall be pardoned for thus wandering into the regions of another art than architecture, for the sake of analogy and illustration.

And now I would ask, to what good end does this chaos of opposition tend? I may be told that controversy itself has its good, but I maintain the contrary, unless such controversy be conducted upon sounder and better defined principles, or, as I may say, upon some principle rather than the no-principle which at present prevails.

In a number of a periodical published a few days since appeared some remarks which, after an allusion to the unequal circumstances and contrary prejudices of certain parties to a controversy, proceed thus:—"Controversy between such men is interminable. It is not pure controversy—not the controversy that leads to the discovery of truth; for the ears and eyes of both parties being partially shut, the truth can never be perceived by either. They are both blind of an eye; their ears are stopped; neither will yield one jot or tittle; and, in the heat of intellectual battle, they very often deny that there is any truth or goodness whatever on the other side. This is not pure controversy. There can be no such thing until the ears and eyes of men are opened."

In making this quotation I would not be understood as condemning even such imperfect controversy as we can get, supposing, as I have said before, that some definite leading

* Read at a meeting of the Architectural Association on the 16th inst.

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